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ProtonMail

COMMENTS

Clarifying recent misinformation

self.ProtonMail

submitted an hour ago by andy1011000 - Proton CEO

There's some misinformation floating around that I think is worth a post to clarify.

Proton generally only suspends accounts if 1) forced to do so by a Swiss govt order 2) we are sure beyond a reasonable doubt the user breached Protons Terms of Service (ToS) or 3) we detect that the user has been compromised.

Contrary to what some people think, **Proton generally only suspends a single service and not all services**. For example, let's say you decide to start sending spam in violation of Proton ToS, Proton Mail may be suspended, but Proton Pass will continue to work. There are of course exceptions to this (for example, if an attacker is hitting your account or has already gotten in, we'll lock the whole thing down until you get in touch with us).

In general, account suspensions due to (1) and (2) are extremely rare, with (3) being slightly more common. (2) typically happens with newly created accounts with are used for spamming or registering large number of accounts at third party services (such as Instagram, etc). **The odds of an account you have been using for a while suddenly being suspended is virtually zero**, and even then, we have a 24/7 team you can contact to appeal.

For ToS violations, it is irrelevant who reports the violation to us, if the violation is verified beyond a reasonable doubt, Proton will suspend the account. Proton data is encrypted, but we use OSINT techniques, our datasets of dark web chatter, information shared with us by other tech companies, and various other methods to do verification.

From time to time, there are claims that Proton is suspending accounts improperly. Our policy is not to comment publicly on specific cases, but there is usually more to the story than meets the eye, and the anonymous posters on the internet generally don't disclose the full story. **Such claims should therefore not be taken as fact, as the facts themselves are usually wrong**.

To give an illustrative example, recently it was claimed that Proton was blocking the account of journalists. However, these were not "journalists" in the traditional sense, but hacktivists who were involved in a number of hacking incidents, which is a violation of Proton's ToS, and therefore subject to suspension of all accounts. In this case, I made the decision to exceptionally restore two accounts because hacktivism cases are not always black and white. However, Proton's policy is that if you use some accounts for illegal purposes, you will also lose access to the accounts where you have not yet conducted illegal activities.

Proton has no choice but to enforce ToS, because if activities which are illegal under Swiss law, or other activities which are technically not illegal but damaging to Proton (such as sending spam) where not forbidden, Proton would unfortunately become blocked by other email providers, hurting legitimate users.

In enforcing our ToS, we show no favor or bias. It does not matter your ideology or which "side" you are on, Proton enforces the ToS uniformly.

Proton's ToS can be found here: <https://proton.me/legal/terms>

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Sut

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<https://redd.it/1ng1apv>

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ProtonMail

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Official subreddit for Proton Mail, Proton Calendar, and Proton Mail Bridge.

Proton Mail is a secure, privacy-focused email service based in Switzerland that uses end-to-end encryption, and offers full support for PGP and standalone email clients via Proton Mail Bridge.

Proton Calendar is an encrypted calendar app that helps you stay on top of your agenda while keeping your data private.

About Proton Mail

Proton Mail - Secure Email Based in Switzerland

Proton Mail is a privacy-enhanced email service in Switzerland. It offers end-to-end encryption, a Gmail-like user interface, secure compatibility with other email providers, and does not track its users.

Proton Mail cannot read any user mailbox or any encrypted emails sent in or out of their

https://archive.ph/GZLpx

1/4

Proton's abuse appeal form can be found here: <https://proton.me/suppo>

Abuse and ToS violations can be reported here (all reports are treated cc <https://proton.me/support/report-abuse>

Thank you for your understanding.

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[–] **misterterrific0** • **65 points** an hour ago

When i first joined Proton within 6 hours my account got suspended due to suspected fraudulent activity

I contacted them and it was resolved within 12 hours, it turns out that having something in one of my additional email addresses made their system think I was posing as a company for fraudulent means.

They offered me compensation in the form of the value of half my 2 year proton unlimited plan as additional credit, I agreed and went on my way. I was impressed and it secured me as a permanent customer of theirs.

Proton is the only company that has ever gone out their way to make something right to that extreme extent for me, a service like theirs can only exist and succeed if they have things in place to stop bad actors, on rare occasions they get it wrong and in my experience will do their best to resolve that and can clearly tell on manual review good and bad actors in said cases.

Anyway thought I would share my exp. Thanks for reading

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[–] **Successful-Day-3219** • **14 points** 41 minutes ago

The CEO of Proton is posting and interacting directly with users on this platform?

That's awesome!

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[–] **charlino5** • **2 points** 34 minutes ago

Yeah, this is fantastic!

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[–] **Kradirhamik** • **20 points** an hour ago

Good to hear from your Andy, thanks

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[–] **binarywheels** • **15 points** an hour ago

Nice one Andy. Most of us are here to stick around long term, regardless of disinformation. But making Linux a first class citizen and sorting Drive / Photos out would remove any remaining doubt as to the viability of Proton being a true Google competitor, especially one with true morals.

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[–] **nerdguy1138** • **1 point** 37 minutes ago

I'd like to be able to use rclone, and not have it randomly die uploading a large number of files.

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[–] **AT3k** - Windows | iOS • **9 points** an hour ago

You cut them too much slack, you should've **outright banned** them from the platform. If they damage Proton's infrastructure in any way, such as damaging **IP reputation**, it forces more companies to reject Proton emails. This is also the case for SimpleLogin. If people are using it for *temporary email addresses* (which is against ToS) and reach the **FAFO (Fuck Around and Find Out)** stage, getting their accounts suspended or banned again forces companies to reject SimpleLogin aliases - which some already do. Custom domains are one way to bypass *some* rejections, but some companies are now even doing MX lookup.

Hacktivists should outright not be allowed on the platform, and neither should anyone else looking to ruin Proton for the many of us using it for intended purposes. There are many other email providers who simply don't care - go use them instead and leave Proton alone.

datacenters. The service is compatible with mobile and tablet devices, PGP, and clients like Thunderbird. ProtonMail has been featured in the news and on TV.

This is the official community subreddit for Proton Mail. We discuss blog posts, upcoming features, technical support, and general email security.

Rules

1. Contact support first

<https://proton.me/support/> Support posts on Reddit are generally not made public as they may contain sensitive information.

2. Avoid duplicate posts Please search to see if you're question has already been answered

3. Posts must add value Low effort posts without additional context will be removed

4. Stay on topic

5. Be respectful No personal (or political) attacks, insults or harassment

6. Do not spread misinformation

7. No spam or self-promotion

8. No NSFW content

9. Follow Reddit's Rules

<https://redditinc.com/policies/content-policy>

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MODERATORS

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[–] **misterterrific0** • 7 points an hour ago*

Agreed. This is the exact reason I feel like free plans should NOT be allowed access to hide my email. We are paying for a service and free users even having the opportunity to cause problems for said feature should not be a possibility. A lot of sites are starting to get stricter on custom domains and I dont want to have to resort to using gmail etc.. for the odd site due to Proton Hide-my-email alias domains being blocked.

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MESSAGE THE MODS

< > discussions in r/ProtonMail

3 · 3 comments

Are these "view" ribbons gone already again?

[–] **StephInTheDeep** • 2 points 22 minutes ago

Just jumped on the proton train.

It's reassuring seeing the CEO be active here

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[–] **ContentiousPlan** • 1 point 25 minutes ago

Thank you

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[–] **HeavenlyPear** • 1 point 15 minutes ago

Thank you for your effort to stay transparent. We know that, as the number of Proton users increases, it will be harder to keep this level of communication, but for the moment I think it is appreciated.

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[–] **Cript0Dantes** • 1 point 14 minutes ago

Thanks for clarifying, it helps to understand Proton’s perspective. Still, this raises some important questions for users.

If Proton relies not only on Swiss court orders but also on OSINT, dark web datasets, and reports from other tech companies to verify ToS violations, that’s a very broad scope of discretion. “Beyond a reasonable doubt” in this context isn’t a legal standard, it’s Proton’s internal threshold and as the Phrack case shows, they can and do make mistakes, since two accounts had to be reinstated later.

I also think the way you frame them as “hacktivists” instead of “journalists” matters. Depending on where you stand, the same activities could be seen as investigative research or ToS violations. That ambiguity is exactly what worries people who depend on Proton for sensitive work.

Finally, saying “such claims are usually wrong” without more transparency puts all the trust burden back on the user. If Proton wants to be seen not just as an alternative to Gmail, but as a privacy leader for activists and journalists, publishing clearer criteria and aggregate statistics about suspensions would go a long way.

Encryption is only half of trust. Transparency is the other half.

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[–] **metalrooster8** • 1 point 13 minutes ago

There’s a difference between providing services for users who are known to be hacktivists and users explicitly using the services in unlawful hacktivists activities.

If these users were confirmed to be using Proton services in a way that violates the terms of service, I can’t argue against that. But if these users are simply on some list of known hacktivists, but there’s no indication they utilized Proton services for these activities, I am strongly against this.

Understanding that you don’t comment on specifics in these cases, I think the answer to the above question is very important.

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[–] **VivWoof** • 1 point a minute ago

I have some questions about the recent situation with the two accounts suspensions, if it's possible to ask here.

1. Does the Swiss law also apply to, in this case, hacktivism that was conducted outside of Switzerland but uses ProtonMail as a communication tool?
2. It was mentioned by news outlets, such as The Intercept, that Proton was informed by a CERT that a number of Proton accounts were suspected of illegal

activities, including the two accounts by the hacktivists. Is it possible to name which CERT have given the information to Proton?

3. How does Proton distinguish between unauthorized and illegal hacking activities and Ethical Hacking activities conducted by journalists, NGOs and Non-profit organizations that abide by Swiss Criminal laws?

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[–] **Kooky-Struggle4367** • 1 point 50 minutes ago

Newer Proton services user here. If everything once inside Protons servers is encrypted. How do you know they violated ToS?

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[–] **tintreack** • 4 points 40 minutes ago

That address was already public, and law enforcement knew about its abuse through other channels. It's like going hunting in camouflage boots while the rest of your outfit is a bright pink dress, you've basically given yourself away. People keep mixing up anonymity and privacy, but they're not the same thing.

Plenty of folks take steps toward privacy to dodge ads and stop their data from being sold, and that's absolutely worth doing, every little bit helps. But if you're still running all of this from a Windows machine, you've already left a million cracks wide open. I think that's what led to the discovery that this individual was breaking the terms of service. I could be wrong.

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[–] **Kooky-Struggle4367** • 1 point 24 minutes ago

Ok, I get ya. Thanks for the explanation.

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[–] **NotRenton** • 2 points 8 minutes ago

Proton data is encrypted, but we use OSINT techniques, our datasets of dark web chatter, information shared with us by other tech companies, and various other methods to do verification.

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[–] **charlino5** • 1 point 33 minutes ago

I really appreciate this write up! Thank you for going above and beyond.

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[–] [deleted] 58 minutes ago*

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[–] [deleted] 48 minutes ago

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